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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 16 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the letter dated 15 March 1998 from Mr. Mirko Marjanović, President of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, to Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

I would be very grateful if you would kindly circulate the text of the present letter and its annex as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 113 (b) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIĆ
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/53/50.

ANNEX

Letter dated 15 March 1998 from the President of the Government of the Republic of Serbia to the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

Terrorism has become, as you know, a great danger to modern humanity. No one can deny the legitimate right of every country to fight against this common evil by any means necessary.

I assure you that the recent actions of police forces of the Republic of Serbia in Kosovo and Metohija have been carried out exclusively in the function of combating terrorism, which escalated in the past months, bringing about suffering of a great number of innocent citizens. The Serbs and the members of the police force were not the only victims of ever more frequent terrorist attacks; even a greater number of victims were from among the members of the Albanian national minority, only because they expressed their loyalty to the State which they live in.

Instead of showing understanding for justified measures undertaken against terrorism in Kosovo and Metohija, diverse disinformation emerged followed by unfounded criticism of the actions of state authorities of the Republic of Serbia.

I wish to assure you that the authorities of the Republic of Serbia make a clear distinction between terrorists and terrorism on the one hand, and the members of national minorities, on the other. The measures undertaken, of an exclusively defensive nature, aimed against unscrupulous and well-organized terrorist attacks, were strictly limited and have been carried out respecting the regulations and the security of citizens and their property.

Appreciating as we do the experiences and the reputation of your organization throughout the world, as well as its status, I wish to inform you that the Government of the Republic of Serbia would gladly accept the presence of an ad hoc delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Kosovo and Metohija, which would have the opportunity to obtain first-hand knowledge of the actual state of affairs.

Having all that in mind, I take this opportunity to invite you to designate an ad hoc team of impartial and recognized experts, with equitable representation from different countries, which would, in cooperation with the experts of the Yugoslav Red Cross, be informed on site, through the inspection of forensic documentation, of the facts concerning the actions undertaken against the terrorist in Kosovo and Metohija, as well as of the consequences of the terrorist attacks on Serbs, policemen and the members of the Albanian national minority.

The authorities of the Republic of Serbia are ready, as may be necessary after the inspection of forensic documentation, to exhume the bodies of the buried victims for the purposes of the representatives of your ad hoc team, in order to eliminate all suspicions and to obtain a clear picture of the consequences of the terrorists' actions and the fight against terrorism.

(Signed) Mirko MARJANOVIĆ
President of the Government
of the Republic of Serbia